1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
EZ6 Malta EZ6

rather obscured the simultaneous mounting of a five-year Economic Development Plan. This is aimed at the establishment of manufacturing industries and envisages the expenditure of over £32,000,000, the bulk of which is to be contributed by the United Kingdom. Internal Legislation under the Aids to Industries Ordinance XXI of 1959 offers attractive terms to immigrant and local enterprises. At Marsa, an Industrial Estate is rapidly being built, public utilities are being extended and facilities for technical and craft training improved. Completion is expected in 1961 of the first commercial deep-water quays, complete with storage and handling facilities. Several British business interests have already responded to these new attractions.

However, the fundamental characteristics of the Maltese economy and society remain, and the whole complex of resources, appraisal of resources and social needs and demands must be appreciated before effective forces of change will appear.

As a last short study we turn to the development of communications and public transport in the Maltese Islands, which is of significance for two main reasons. First, in the pattern that has appeared we can see the interplay of all those forces, Imperial and indigenous, which have affected Maltese life. Secondly, although the Islands are small, distance and remoteness are everywhere measured mentally as well as physically, and the impact of modern transport has revolutionised Maltese life. The road pattern in Malta is complex and generally ancient (Fig. 68). It is impossible to categorise past and present roads sufficiently precisely to show cartographically the changes that have taken place and description must necessarily be brief. As shown in Worsley's survey of 1824 (21), the main alignments were then concentrated in the central region. Away from the grid-plan streets of Valletta and the less geometrical Three Cities (22), cart and carriage roads ran out to the main casals (within the zone referred to above as now served by Dockyard special buses) and inter-connected most of the rural centres. That part of the Island north of the Victoria Lines was poorly served. In Gozo, country tracks connected the villages with the inland capital of Rabat which in turn had a carriage road to the port of Mgarr.

By 1911 (23) traffic had increased considerably, particularly within a four-mile radius of Valletta, and the Royal Commissioners of that year ventured to question on financial grounds the need for maintaining the very large mileage of the dense central and eastern network of roads, most of which as the result of long customary use and evolution were of equal status although often strictly unnecessary. The northern and southern coastlands were still served only by a few 'feeder lines' from interior settlements, but with the bridging of the Isperanza gorge at Mosta, that town had become a route focus for the whole of the northern territory and henceforward began to rival Rabat. Military needs had resulted in improvements being made to some roads but, more important still, had called into being in 1881 a railway running from Valletta to Rabat, and later extended expensively to the camp and hospital at Mtarfa. By 1911 the operating loss had become so great as to warrant special inquiry by the Commission. The failure was due partly to the fact that the system had not been designed on commercial lines, partly because the total demand for transport was still relatively small in the areas served, but mainly because a railway service could not be flexible enough to meet the particular demand that did exist. In 1905 a tramway system, less open to objection on all these grounds, was opened. First the area between Valletta, Marsa and Hamrun was served, and later lines were built to Zebbug. Designed for passenger rather than freight carrying, the tramways assisted in the extension of urban influence into the country. Then as now, however, that indented coastal configuration to which Malta owes her natural harbours, and around which resides the majority of the island's population, made land communication in the conurbation area tortuous and lengthy. Innumerable ferries and the *dghajjes* boats in Marsamxett and Grand Harbour offered more convenient carriage.

During and after World War I, motor vehicles made their appearance and the railroad and tramways rapidly disappeared leaving as sole traces of their

[See p. 184- Anb-Analyst]

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961

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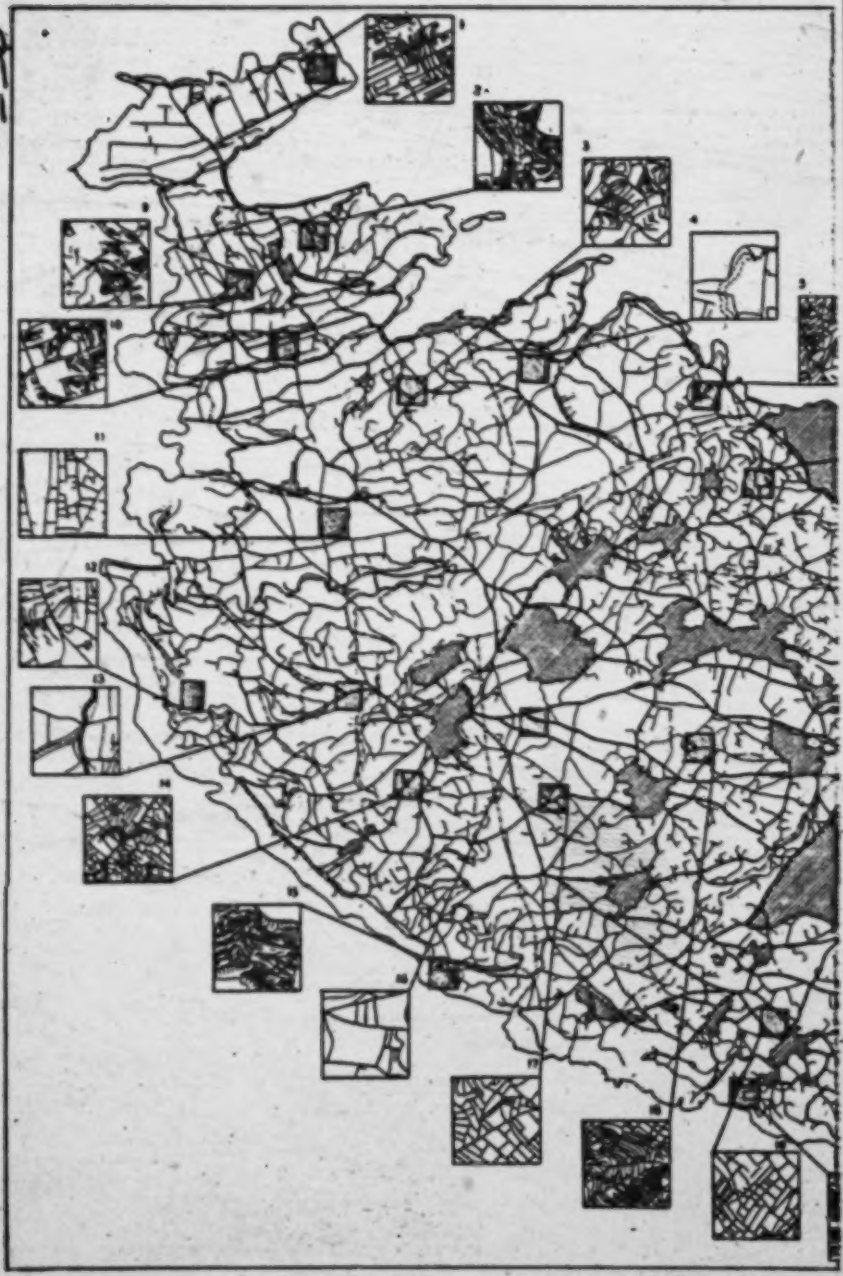

[p. 184-A]

Fig. 68 Communications and Field Patterns

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961

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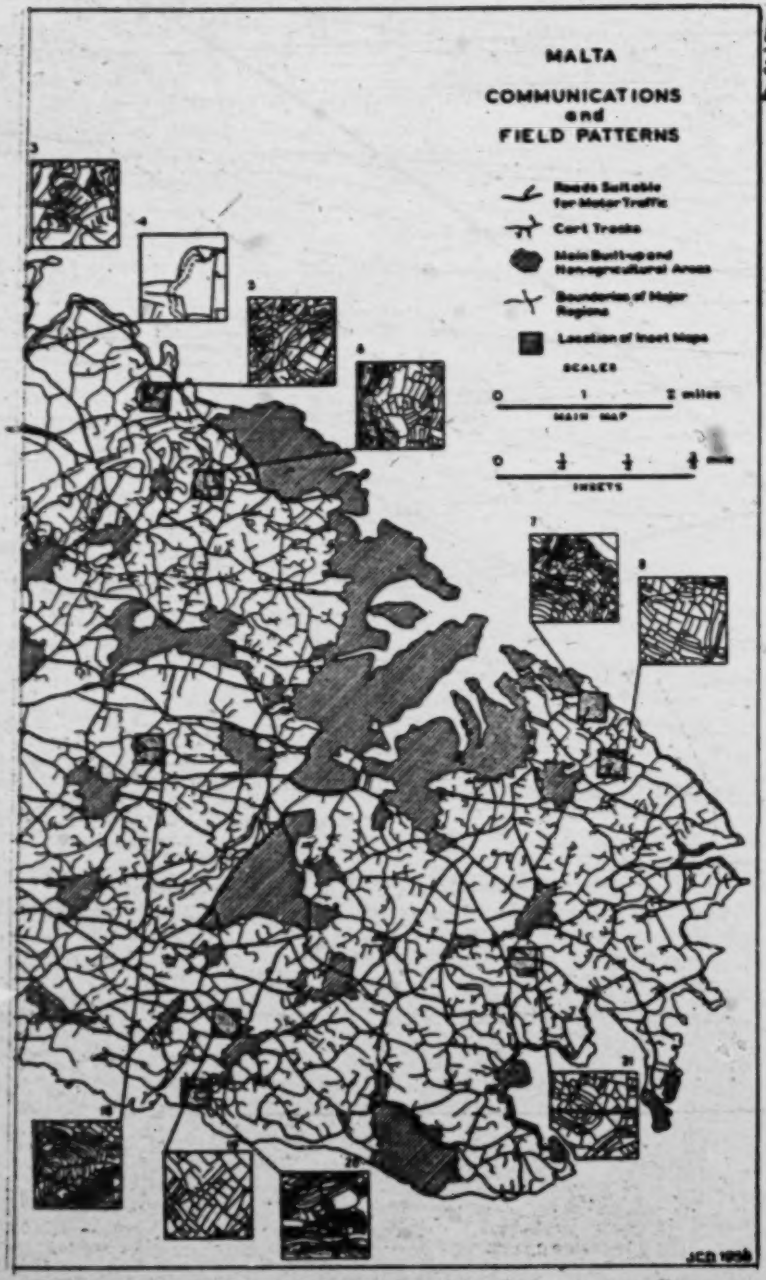

Communications and Field Patterns.

[p. 184-B]

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
EZ6 Malta EZ6

D. Note on Fig. 68

COMMUNICATIONS AND FIELD PATTERNS

Roads, tracks, stone walls and buildings are the human imprint on the surface of the land and the first three of these elements are illustrated in Fig. 68. The pattern of communications, while at first appearing quite devoid of plan, nevertheless shows distinct regional characteristics. On the Coralline Uplands, where cultivated land is often scattered among stretches of karst, there are few motorable roads, but numerous tracks appear to wander at will across the surface. In the Marfa, Mellieha Ridge and Bajda Ridge districts, a grid-iron pattern of roads and tracks reflects mid-nineteenth century plans for the allocation of land.

Basins and lowlands such as Mikieb, Bingemma, Wied tal-Pwales, the Blue Clay Basin and Wied il-Ghasel, are characterised by an open network which includes several important roads and a minimum of linking tracks, an arrangement also characteristic of the central plains west of Zebbug and Siggiewi. In these areas, the gentle slopes obviate the necessity for cart access to every field while the absence of terraces does away with the need for well-defined, walled tracks. 'Service tracks' leading off the main lines, are virtually absent. This is in complete contrast with the state of affairs prevailing throughout the bulk of central, southern and eastern Malta, where roads and connecting tracks form a denser web between the numerous settlements and their lands. Here, 'cul-de-sac' service tracks abound and few fields are more than a quarter of a mile from one of them. There is a marked tendency for the network to become closer in regions where steep slopes are common as in the Naxxar-Gharghur hills and around the Wied il-Kbir complex.

The inset maps, each covering an area of one-ninth square mile, illustrate the great variety of field size, shape and arrangement to be found in Malta.

1. Marfa. The rectilinear nineteenth-century pattern has been superimposed on older patterns which show a clear relationship to topography.
2. Mellieha Upland - Wied Ghajn Zejtuna. The narrow terraces of the sharply sloping valley sides contrast with the rather larger fields of the valley floor and with the open karst of the upland.
3. Wardija Uplands. An irregular pattern developed on the Coralline plateau summit.
4. Wied il-Ghasel. Unusually large, open fields with only occasional walls. The wied channel (shown by broken lines) has been ploughed over.
5. Ghallis Hills. Small, irregular enclosures on the hill tops; larger, more regular fields in the small valley seen in the south-east.
6. Naxxar-Gharghur Hills. Large fields on the smooth hill summits; extremely narrow terraces on the sharply incised valley sides.
7. Ricasoli-Zonkor Ridge. Minute enclosures, the smallest in Malta, on the seaward side of the ridge.
8. Larger more regular fields on the southerly, inland slopes of the same ridge.
9. Mellieha Ridge. Fragments of an old, topographically-determined pattern remain, on which a few lines of more recent origin have been superimposed.
10. Bajda Ridge. A clear example of the superimposition already referred to.
11. Bingemma Basin. Large fields, often with a strip formation, are typical of down-faulted Upper Coralline basins.
12. Santi-Bingemma Uplands. Now almost entirely abandoned: the fragmentary character of the pattern is typical of such areas.
13. Blue Clay Basin, near Fiddien Bridge. Large, open fields.
14. Rabat-Dingli Uplands. A more intensively worked section of the Upper Coralline along the Rabat-Dingli road (shown by a double line). Contrast with number 12.
15. Western Rdum Lands. Part of the Rdum tal-Lunzjata showing the minute subdivision typical of such areas.
16, 17, 18, illustrate variations within the central part of Malta. In example 16, the fields are particularly large. 17 shows greater subdivision, irregular in the north and approaching the rectilinear in the south. 18 illustrates the effects of steeper slopes, in this case on the southern side of the Wied is-Sewda.
19. A regular pattern on gentle slopes between Qrendi and Mqabba.
20. Minute terraces near the southern coast.
21. The effect of recent road building is illustrated here in the splitting up of no less than 14 fields, along a 600 yard stretch of road. In the process, a number of minute fields of little or no value have been formed.

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1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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Chapter VIII

AGRICULTURAL REGIONS

Individual crop distributions have been considered in the preceding chapter but in order to understand the nature of Maltese agriculture, more complex analyses of spatial differentiation must be made. The method adopted is to identify areas characterised by particular crop assemblages and thus to define agricultural regions. 24 1* 3 1*

Over the Islands as a whole may be observed a series of distinct farming landscapes which reflect a graduation in physical and socio-economic conditions. The lowest grade of land use is represented by marginal production of the hardiest fodders and legumes. Vetches and poor barley are cultivated in small pockets of soil lying between expanses of bare karst. The regions in which this pattern is dominant, being primarily used as rough grazing land, are most suitably referred to as *xaghra*. Extensive dry farming covers much of the Islands, varying in quality particularly with variations in exposure, slope and water supply. The poorest type is restricted to low-grade cereals, sulla and the minor fodders and legumes. A medium grade of dry farming, occurring where conditions are more favourable, is characterised by crops of better quality and higher value. Potatoes become prominent and specialised production of certain vegetables such as *qarugh baghli* appears. On well watered but non-irrigated land, the crop assemblage is further enlarged by the addition of vines on an appreciable scale. Vegetables now include both spring- and summer-grown, field and garden types, notably brassicas. Where irrigation is possible, higher-value vegetable crops such as tomatoes, melons and artichokes become widespread, although the potato is dominant. Small-scale cultivation of fruit and table-grapes is also of some importance. Finally, the *ġnien* and *rdum* lands, which are distinct although not everywhere the most intensively worked areas, are often characterised by much inter-cultivation and by the varying importance of all the high-value crops. It is here that fruit is most widely grown. These six types of crop assemblage are readily recognisable and provide the basic criteria for regional analysis of the rural landscapes of Malta and of Gozo. [233]

Malta

In Malta, there is a marked correspondence between the physiographic regions as described in Chapter II and the agricultural regions. A major threefold division may be observed in both cases:-

A. The Western Scarplands.
B. The Wied-il Ghasel District.
C. The Hills and Plains of the Centre and East.

A. THE WESTERN SCARPLANDS

The physical characteristics of this major region have been outlined in Chapter I and their effect on the distribution of waste and cultivated land noted in Chapter VII B. The south-west to north-east graining of the land is the predominant physical control, but secondary controls are exerted by details of aspect, altitude, soil and water supply, so that many local deviations from the general pattern of wasteland ridge and cultivated basin may be observed. General points concerning settlements include the tendency for these to develop at the junction of the two types of landscape, though there are important exceptions to this arrangement. The alignment of roads further affects the degree to which particular districts have been developed or neglected. The fact that road [491]

[Text Continues on P. 238]

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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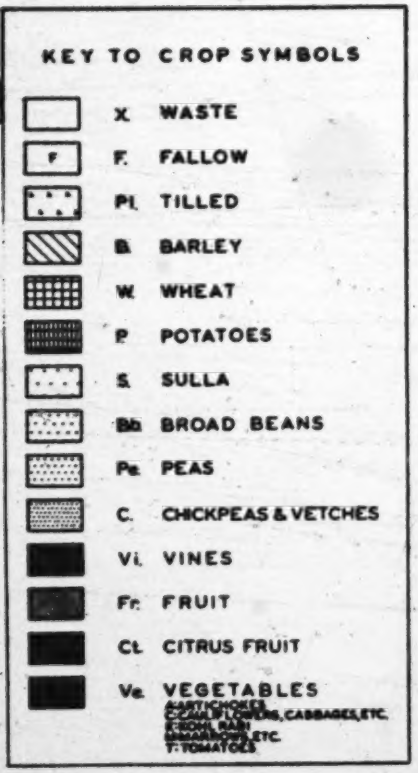

Fig. 101 Key to Crop Symbols as used in Figs. 102-132 inclusive.

[491] building has been influenced not only by the needs of the farming community but also by military and, more recently, by tourist requirements adds a further element to an already complicated pattern. Isolation is a social and economic matter as well as a physical one. For all these reasons, detailed regional study is necessary before the full range of conditions present in this region can be appreciated.

A point of particular application to the Scarplands is their economically marginal character. It is here that development and neglect, advance and withdrawal of the 'cultivation frontier' have been most effective, reflecting changes in the economic and social position of agriculture and the rural community. Thus published maps of this region show a rectilinear pattern of roads, tracks and field boundaries which takes no account of topography, contrasting with the older field pattern on which it is often superimposed. This palimpsest of economic change appears mainly on land once Government owned and is most extensive in Marfa, the northern flanks of Mellieha Ridge and on Bajda Ridge (Fig. 68).

A.I. MARFA

Much of the peninsula is now *xaghra* land although a larger area has been cultivated in the past. Poor dry farming persists in a few areas such ta'Ramal

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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Dalam, a good deal of this better land has been sterilised by the construction of a large pumping station, but a small pocket of intensive potato-growing occurs before the sea is reached. In the Wied has-Saptan, the transition is marked by a belt of marshy land carrying canes, bullrushes and grasses which are tended and 'cropped'. Below this lies a second small alluvial area also largely under potatoes. This district as a whole possesses a greater variety of physical and land-use conditions than any other in Eastern Malta.

From Qala San Gorg to Benghisa Point, a narrow coastal lowland has been completely taken out of cultivation by settlement growth and by commercial and military installations. The slopes behind this zone are traversed by a series of shallow wieds in which lie narrow strips of wasteland. All dry-farmed crops are represented in this hilly country, even to a few vines grown near the southern coast in a strangely exposed position.

In this small region is exemplified the major problem which besets the Maltese agricultural community and which complicates the patterns of land-use and farming practice in the island. New, well-surfaced roads serve Hal Far and Kalafrana, but between these arteries lies a neglected and relatively remote farming area. Distances involved are small, particularly when the attraction of non-rural life pulls people away from the land. However, as noted elsewhere, the same distances become exaggerated in their effect of isolating the country-dwellers who remain. The dichotomy of town and country is thus perpetuated.

GENERAL

The main facts underlying the regional differentiation of Maltese agriculture may be summarised as follows. While structure and topography control the general distribution of these cropping combinations, important regional differences result from variations in weather and micro-climate. Soil controls, in the main, coincide with those of structure and outcrop, but slope, as affecting removal and accumulation, together with the widespread traditional practice of transporting soil to artificial fields, break up the simple geological pattern.

Farming types in Malta must be identified against a background of socio-economic change. Commercial production is the rule, but considerable variations result from differing degrees of linkage with markets. Socially, this is paralleled by differences in the extent to which rural communities are affected by urban desires and emulations. Proximity to, or remoteness from town life are most important.

Wasteland is spreading most rapidly on the remote and physically hard lands. The flight from the land is slower where it is more productive. General deterioration is most widespread on lands of medium quality where the attraction of town life is strong. On the immediate fringes of the built-up areas, conditions are by no means uniform. While in some cases market gardening provides a particularly intensive form of land use, in others encroachment of roads and buildings produces a jumble of building sites, abandoned fields and a few surviving patches of cultivation. Around the main conurbation as delimited in Fig. 97, lie many pockets of true urban farming. In many of these, as in the case illustrated by Fig. 125, the jostling together of stock-yards and houses and fields, both abandoned and cropped, shows the town triumphant.

Agricultural Regions of Gozo

The physiographic divisions already indicated in Chapter 1 and shown in Fig. 4 are suitable for a regional analysis of agricultural practice in Gozo. Printed maps of Gozo bear few local place-names and thus it has been necessary to devise the special nomenclature used in the present section and illustrated in Fig. 76.

[See P. 34-A -- Analyst]
[See P. 194 -- Analyst]

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
EZ6 Malta EZ6

for the evening meal, Rosary, and sleep. Electricity has made his time-table only slightly less dependent on the times of the rising and setting sun.

Increased spending-power, a more varied diet now including a variety of preserved and non-local foods, and the replacement of home-produced cotton by purchased materials for making clothes, have all contributed to the extension of shopping facilities in the villages. Apart from the 'general store', specialised shops have also made their appearance - butchers, pharmacists, clothing shops, and so on. The 1939-45 war brought flour and bread rationing and the end of home-baking - hence a further village specialisation (see p. 182). Since the War, the number of vans touring the countryside every week has increased rapidly to bring a variety of wares to the door of even the most lonely farmhouse. The *petrolju* van was early in the field, for the rural Maltese have long relied on paraffin for both cooking and such heating as the houses receive. Yet another addition in recent years to the diet of the poorer classes has been the free distributions of food (cheese, rice, corn-meal and flour) made by C.A.R.E. and by Catholic Relief Services (cheese, beans, flour, etc.), another organisation distributing surplus United States food supplies abroad.

Village housing is changing more slowly. The traditional Maltese rural home was a flat-roofed dwelling built round an enclosed courtyard, from which a staircase frequently led to an upper floor. The courtyard was the centre of domestic life and much of the regular work of the household was done here. A door, large enough to take a cart, opened on to the street. Windows on outside walls were small and rare. In many of the older parts of the villages, accommodation for animals and stores adjoins the rooms occupied by the family, the whole forming a compact economic and domestic unit. Water was carried from a village pump and sanitation, if any, was limited to independent cess-pits requiring periodic emptying. In winter such premises were liable to be very cold; in the heat of summer the rough roads of beaten earth readily produced a fine dust which can only have had harmful effects on the widespread trachoma and similar ailments.

Nowadays much of this survives only in the memory of the older people. Only some village streets in Gozo are not now surfaced; mains sewerage has been extended to all the larger villages of Malta; electricity is absent only in north-western Gozo; familiar red telephone kiosks have appeared all over the islands; the larger villages in Malta have cinemas, in addition to much older Band Club buildings.

The essential features of the village society within which the Maltese farmer lives today may be summarised thus in conclusion:-

Economically, there has been a change from the independent, subsistent family unit to a diversified and inter-dependent occupational structure in the village, along with a realisation of the impossibility of maintaining Maltese agriculture in its traditional form without 'artificial' support. Materially, the village is seen to have benefited from a wide range of developments which have improved it as a place in which to live for the Maltese countryman with his now greater range of demands - and the buying-power with which to achieve them, thanks to war-time siege and subsequently to Government subsidy and guarantee. Socially, literacy and the awareness of a different way of life beyond the village have brought to the younger generation an intense dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction not only with the social regime of the village, even in its present broadened and functionally diversified form, but also with the farming on which the community has depended.

Thus farming in its present form is waning and the Maltese farmer as he was in the recent past - and still is among the older generation - is a disappearing individual. If the clash between the present younger generation and the old order can be resolved and if the retreat from the land can be stemmed at all, a different kind of agriculture will emerge with a new type of farmer and a changed rural society.

REFERENCES

1. Census of the Maltese Islands 1948, Table 53.
2. C.A.R.E. - Co-operative for American Remittances to Everywhere.

Note: For a fuller consideration see B. W. Beeley: 'The Individual and Changing Rural Society in Malta', Ph.D. Thesis, Durham, 1960.

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2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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[P.2]

MALTA AND GOZO

[Village of Mġarr]

By the mid-thirties Mġarr had 11.

175 become independent of Mosta as a Police area and had been
722 connected to the Telephone network[15]. Other amenities
648 to reach the village about this time included a number of
levelled roads, although asphalting did not appear until
[365] after the 1939-45 War. During the War years most con-
[491] struction activity was halted. Some 700 refugees from the
blitzed harbour areas were billeted in the village; thirty
shelters were dug, and about 600 bombs fell in the vicinity
of the village destroying two houses and killing three
people (B/291). United States' forces camped near Mġarr
prior to the Sicily invasion: an Italian aircraft crashed
not far away. Mġarr heard about the war and experienced
as much of it at first hand as most other rural parts of the
Islands lying well away from the Dockyard, air bases and
[434] other strategic targets. Food rationing and Government
control of production put the farmers of Mġarr in as strong
[241] a position as elsewhere but at the worst period of the siege
even they were reduced to chewing carob beans[12].

36 By the advent of the present decade Mġarr had acquired
the normal characteristics of community life of village
Malta, with Church, school, police station, dispensary and
[178] doctor, telephones, and roads. The built-up area has since
[794] expanded rapidly. In this present decade, too, the village
has gone on to 'catch-up' with older settlements to the
extent of establishing the four branches of the Catholic
[795] Action movement (Appendix 4). A most modern and well-
[544] appointed 'oratory' has for five years been the focal point
of Catholic teaching and social work in the Parish. Its
theatre holds 700 and shows films on Sundays and special
[546] occasions. More recently a commercial cinema has opened
in the village but, one understands, it cannot detract from
the popularity of the oratory film show.

443 Within the past few years, shops have appeared in the
[366] village which is now independent in this respect for food
and general items. Travelling vans, a prominent feature of
the countryside, further swell the range of goods available
on the spot and are joined in this door to door service by
[484] the weekly paraffin (petrolju) vehicle. For other items
Mġarr housewives still make the journey to Mosta or
[494] Valletta on the buses which operate every few hours; a
[178] generation ago their mothers carried bread on their backs
each week from Mosta, the parent village.

184 On account of its recent development, Mġarr lacks
794 certain features found in the larger and much older
settlements. The Catholic Action is the only Lay Movement
in the village - though it is notably active there, and of
the Confraternities which are numerous in the older
settlements Mġarr has only three (Appendix 4).

include such otypically rural features as ground-floor windows[16]. In Mġarr the Church and the Jubilee Esplanade are at the centre of village organization with most of the shops, police station and dispensary close by, and through this central area pass the bus routes from Ghajn Tuffieha, to the north, and Mosta to the east. Gharghur, on the other hand, is a village of many centuries standing. Its morphology is as irregular as that of Mġarr is regular. As one expects of a Maltese village the great Parish Church stands in the centre of the houses and the narrow streets - just as the Faith of the people stands in the centre of their life and work. The old streets of Gharghur grew up without any town-planning. Narrow alleys lead off to quiet courts; goat-pens, tiny shops and houses within yards of each other break the monotony of the streets in which few windows appear at ground-floor level[16]. First floor windows are seen, along with decorative balcony work and other embellishments of the yellow limestone walls. Map 6 distinguishes those parts of the village which have undergone new development, largely since 1945. The main part of the work has been the cutting of a section of new road through old buildings between the Church and the recent Government school. This road now carries the bus route from the Church square, the terminus, to Naxxar, and also houses the police station and the Government dispensary. Here then is the core area of the village (Map 6)

(i) a main street, carrying a regular bus route,
(ii) Church, police station, dispensary and school,
(iii) shops and bars nearby.

Turning again to Mġarr we now perceive the basic similarities of pattern (Maps 5 and 6).

In the case of ŻURRIEQ (Map 7) the same basic elements appear, though the built-up area of this village is much larger and there are additional, more urbanate, features. Bubaqra is an example of a dependent hamlet lacking the full complement of features of an independent village; it has no school, police station, etc. Żurrieq's morphological development follows the general pattern of the long-established Maltese villages with narrow, twisting streets and alleys delving seemingly at random into the built-up mass of houses, farm buildings, shops and work premises. The village is large enough to allow of secondary nuclei, particularly around churches or chapels, but the bulk of activity is focussed on the core area between Parish Church and School and in and near Churchill Square with its Band Club and Football Club premises, Lotto office[17], and shops.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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MDINA, "THE NOTABLE CITY"
In the background Mosta, with its domed church.
[*See pp. 90 and 203.*]

THE CATHEDRAL, MDINA, FLOODLIT FOR THE JUBILEE OF KING GEORGE V
[*See p. 88.*]

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[facing P. 97]